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## THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PSYCHOLOGY

By EDMUND B. HUEY.

The Sixth International Congress of Psychology convened at Geneva, August 3, 1909, and closed at noon, August 7. The committee of organization, consisting of Messrs. Flournoy, Ladame, Claparède, Cellérier, and Yng, had well arranged for the comfort and entertainment of the visitors, and worked out, as well, certain improvements in the internal procedure of the Congress. An informal reunion on the eve of the Congress was followed on successive evenings by receptions, a tour of Lake Geneva, a banquet given by the Council of State and the city of Geneva, and a farewell luncheon. The psychologists and their accompanying friends owe much to Geneva for this generous welcome, and the work of the Congress was much facilitated by these opportunities for personal acquaintance and discussion. A list of members, with their addresses and positions, was early placed in the hands of each member, and was a constant convenience.

There had been chosen, in advance, ten principal themes for discussion, and two or three principal reporters for each theme. The reports were obtained in advance of the Congress, and were printed and put in the hands of members on or before their arrival in Geneva. By this means the inconvenience suffered by previous Congresses, of having a very large number of "individual contributions" on very many disparate subjects, was reduced to a minimum. There were still some fifty individual contributions, as against 282 at Rome in 1905, but at Geneva their presentation and discussion occurred for the most part in secondary halls, and did not interrupt the consecutive treatment of the chosen themes. The individual contributions themselves were grouped, as much as possible, by subjects, and later by languages. There were also adjourned meetings in the secondary halls to continue discussions of the main themes. Apart from the main meetings occurred, as well, a few demonstrations of special apparatus and methods, an exposition of apparatus by various European dealers and mechanics, and an exposition of certain methods of instruction in schools for the feeble-minded.

The central themes, in the order in which they were discussed, were as follows: The Psychology of Religion, reported by Professors Höffding and Leuba. The Subconscious, Professors Dessoir, Pierre Janet (absent), Prince. Mediumistic Phenomena, Professor Alrutz of Upsala. Backward Children, Drs. Decroly of Brussels, Ferrari of Bologna, Heller of Vienna, and Witmer (absent). Tropisms, Professors Bohn (Paris), Fr. Darwin (absent), Jennings (absent), Loeb. Orientation at a Distance, Professor A. Thauziès of Périgueux, France. The Feelings, Professor Külpe, Dr. Sollier. Perception of the Positions and Movements of our Body and Limbs, Professor Bourdon (Rennes). The Methodology of Pedagogical Psychology, Mlle. Dr. Ioteyko of Brussels.

Reporting on the psychology of religion, Professor Höffding argued that each of our feelings depends on some need which demands satisfaction, and thus on certain *values*,—physical, æsthetic, intellectual, moral. The religious character of the psychic life consists in our

feelings about the *fate* of these values, in a need for security and calm in the soul in regard to them. The amount and character of our religious experiences will depend on which of these values touches most the heart of the individual. He may feel himself master of his fate and of that of his chosen values, and thus may dispense with religion. Or he may have any of a variety of feelings,—fear, hope, resignation, joy, chagrin, admiration and veneration, indignation, peace or its opposite. Religion having taken many forms, must be studied historically as well as by psychological observation and analysis,—in this not differing from a host of other psychological questions. The gods were divine because they were supposed to maintain men's supreme values, and the character of the gods depended on what values were felt as supreme. Man first sustained his values by his magic; then, resigning himself to his own insufficiency here, he sought to realize their safety through appeal to beings more powerful than man. Of religious documents the most precious for the psychologist are those which show how eminent persons, plunged in the religious *milieu* of their time and people, react to and interpret the religious value of the prevailing dogmas and rites. The sudden appearance of great religious personalities may be compared to de Vries's mutations. Here there are certainly some enigmas and problems not yet solved. But this does not make it necessary to appeal to transcendent causes. And just as the biologists, while admitting the birth of new organic types in mutations, are asking if there were not preparatory, *premutation* periods of insensible gradations, so back of these sudden psychic transformations it may be our task to find neglected forces that have been active.

Professor Leuba believes that man first felt himself surrounded by beings of the psychic order, and later conceived the force material. Man became religious when he felt himself in relation with certain of the psychic forces. At first, religion was amorphous, larval, not yet organized to a system of beliefs and social practices. This religious condition is a stage found still in the decay of religions, and in certain individuals of all times. Religion has generally been a relation with *personal* powers; but there are exceptions in early Buddhism, in Comte, in certain modern pantheists and others who find in the service of Humanity what others seek in God. Religions, then, in their exterior aspect, are the systems of visible relations with these personal or impersonal powers, and in their subjective aspect are the states of consciousness which correspond to these. Generally the divine is conceived simply by the effects attributed to it, as electricity is conceived in terms of lightning, of movements of a machine, or other manifestation. Each pulsation of the religious life, just like the rest of conscious life, consists in will, feeling, and thought, indissolubly bound together in pursuit of an end. One or other of these three predominates in the consciousness, according to circumstances, but predominance is not essence. The God of the ordinary man is a power sufficient for his needs, who can free the sinner, cure the sick, etc. His religion can get on well without the "perfect" or "absolute," for which the religion of certain philosophers have such a special taste.

Differing from Professor Höffding, Professor Leuba considers the pursuit of values, itself, to be religion, when done with the help of a superhuman psychic power. As to the distinction between philosophy and religion, philosophy seeks God to know what he is, religion seeks in him the satisfaction of an insufficiency.

The discussion, taken up again in several secondary meetings, often went far afield; and among the closing resolutions of the con-

gress it was recommended that the psychology of religion should not be one of the themes of the next congress.

On the Subconscious, Dr. Morton Prince reviewed the six main meanings of this term, and found the term *co-conscious* preferable for the active dissociated states which are not really phenomena of "unconscious cerebration." The physiological brain dispositions which subserve memory are simply to be termed unconscious. Dr. Prince emphasized the unreliability of judgment that is not based on personal familiarity with the phenomena in this field of study, and also the fact that "introspection" fails as a technical method, and gives but a poor, inadequate, and partial glimpse into the world of consciousness. The psycho-analytical method, as well, can only give questionable results. Subconscious ideas, he believes, play a large part in normal and in pathological life, but their presence is difficult to prove, as the technical methods *create* dissociations and, therefore, artifacts.

In the absence of Professor Janet, his paper was supported especially by Dr. Bernard Le Roy of Paris. He recalled Janet's original application of the term subconscious to certain phenomena of hysteria, and urged that confusion would still be avoided if the term were restricted to the practical needs of the psychiatric clinic.

Professor Dessoir endeavored to treat the subject from a "purely psychological" standpoint, but based his treatment on certain pre-suppositions regarding the nature of consciousness as "Formprinzip." The discussion which followed did not indicate that this method of approach was likely to be very fruitful.

On the subject of Backward Children, Dr. Decroly proposed and explained a complete system of classification, and pointed out, as de Sanctis and others have done, the insufficiency and inaccuracy of the usual classification into idiots, imbeciles, and feeble-minded or "debiles." He emphasized the importance of taking into account extrinsic causes, the abnormalities of environment, in the production of irregularities, and also the fact that the causes, whether extrinsic or intrinsic, were always multiple.

Dr. Schuyten reported experiments which indicated that certain tests of memory, and even tests with the *æsthesiometer* gave very trustworthy means of distinguishing degrees of intelligence. While this work seems to have been done with much care, the other investigators were not ready to accept these tests as sufficient. Professors de Sanctis of Rome and Ferrari of Bologna were prominent in the discussion, the former urging, among other things, that too much attention was being given to questions of classification.

Professor Loeb, the central figure in the discussion of Tropisms, briefly and clearly reviewed the historical development of the theory of tropisms and the stages of his own study in attempting to explain mental phenomena in terms of physico-chemical laws. Many objections, he thinks, are due to ignorance of these laws, or to the mistaken belief that all the organism's tendencies are necessarily to the organism's advantage; or account is not taken of the fact that tropisms form only one of several classes of physical-chemical processes which are basal to mental functioning. Ideas, for instance, are mechanisms which can heighten the sensitivity for certain stimuli and so lead to tropism-like movements which are directed to a purpose, just as heliotropism may be dependent on the presence of acid, and just as certain other reactions depend upon the presence of sex-secretions.

Discussing the orientation reactions to gravity, Professor Loeb reported experiments proving that these reactions are not regulated by pressure of the otoliths upon the nerve-endings, but that the regula-

tion is mediated by changes occurring within the nerve-endings themselves. If the otoliths are washed out without injuring the nerve-endings, the reactions to gravity occur as before.

Professor Bohn, of Paris, taking the position of Loeb as against Jennings, showed that tropisms must necessarily have a great variability, following all the variations of chemical composition of living matter. He argued that the tropism was not learned but that the apparent "trials and errors" of tropisms were only perturbations caused by the new activities of "differential sensibility," and "associative memory." The tropisms and their variations are very badly adapted, and the world of lower animals is "made of imperfections."

Professor Jennings, in his paper, adopts heartily the aim of Loeb "to analyze the behavior of animals from a chemico-physical point of view and substitute the methods of modern science for the anthropomorphism of the metaphysician." He admits the fact of tropisms in Loeb's sense, and makes much the same definition and limitations of the concept. But even in the reactions in which orientation is a prominent feature, in the tropisms in other words, the organism uses "whatever means it has at its command." So these reactions, like food reactions, are simple in the simplest organisms and complex in the highest ones. Professor Jennings argues essentially for "the complexity, modifiability, and regulatory character of behavior, and its refusal to fit any simple and uniform schemata."

Professor Thauziès gave a demonstration of loosing carrier pigeons, which took up their flight for Versailles and other home points, the time of their arrival being telegraphed to the Congress. Professor Thauziès reviewed the theories of orientation at a distance, adopting none; but he called attention to the perturbations of flight found to occur under atmospheric conditions of "magnetic storm" and "special electrical situation."

Professor Bourdon reviewed the theories and experiments on the function of the labyrinth in mediating the perception of the position of our body and head with reference to the vertical. He reported his own varied experiments with the rotation table, and other apparatus, showing that the "excitations, mechanical, galvanic, etc., of the tonic labyrinth which are produced either normally or experimentally do not affect the consciousness,"—the perception of an inclination of the body "being furnished by sensations of pressure, of distension of skin, and of effort." He admits, of course, the control of movements through stimulation of the labyrinth.

Professor Külpe, in his report on The Feelings, first distinguished between true and false criteria of feeling. The feelings, pleasantness and unpleasantness, may accompany single consciousness contents or may color the whole consciousness; may be active or passive; may be feelings of shock or of mood. There are no qualitatively different varieties of pleasantness or unpleasantness. Professor Külpe classified the methods of investigating the feelings, and made a critical résumé of the results of investigation thus far, and of the theories of feeling.

Dr. Paul Sollier reviewed the theories of *cœnesthesia* and its relation with the consciousness of personality, as observed in various pathological conditions. He suggests that the feeling of our personality may base upon the association between our present and our past states, and that the *cœnesthesia* is the feeling of this association. Or, the *cœnesthesia* may be the sensibility peculiar to the brain as such, giving us data concerning the brain's functioning, accompanied by a special feeling, that of the "me," something beyond the affective tone inherent in every sensation. The centres involved would seem to be in the frontal lobes.

Reporting on Pedagogical Psychology, Mlle. Ioteyko of Brussels, directress of the new *Revue Psychologique*, proposed an interesting application of mathematical methods to psycho-pedagogical problems. Analyzing the fatigue curve, for example, she determines certain parameters, or constant factors, due to diminution of reserve carbo-hydrates, to the using up of albuminoids, to the action of resultant toxins on the muscle, etc. The value of these constants is modified in definite ways by introducing the factor of alcohol, sugar, anæmia of the arm tested, etc. Similarly, she believes, from the complex curve of growth may be analyzed out the values of constituent factors such as muscular force, weight, attention, memory, etc. In a given individual, certain psychic constants, as timidity, weakness, indecision,—certain moral ideas, certain feelings, tend to exercise a certain force in conduct, the total curve being a resultant of these with other factors. *Observation* of the operation of these "parameter" factors in the child's conduct gives results superior to those from *tests*, the latter always presenting an artificial side, though needed to complete the study. The Congress recommended that a committee be appointed to further the interests of psycho-pedagogy. This committee will be appointed by the committee for the next congress.

Reporting on Questions of Unification, Dr. J. Courtier, of Paris, proposed an elaborate system of symbols and signs for use in psychology. Professor Claparède showed the advantages that would come from the adoption and use of a precise nomenclature, and from a determination of equivalent psychological terms in the various languages used in psychology. His report made certain admirable recommendations in these directions.

M. R. de Saussure argued for the use of esperanto as a "base of unification and of comparison of technical terms." As a demonstration three short addresses were delivered in esperanto. The proposition did not meet with any special favor in the Congress. Professor Baldwin made certain recommendations looking toward unification of terminology, and the Congress appointed a committee consisting of Messrs. Baldwin, Claparède, Lippmann (Berlin), and Ferrari (Bologna), to study the subject, receive suggestions, and make recommendations to the next Congress.

The discussion on standardization of colors seemed to indicate that an approximate system of standards, all that seems possible in the present state of science, might best be found on the side of the industries; and M. Th. Valette, of the laboratory of the Gobelins Manufactory in Paris, briefly reported the classification of Chevreul, used in their manufacture of tapestries. A committee on standardization of colors was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Nagel, Asher, Thiéry, Yerkes, Larguier, with a chemist yet to be named.

The next congress will be held in the United States in 1913, preferably in New York or Boston. The Committee of Organization consists of Professor William James, President d'honneur; Professor Baldwin, President effectif; Professors Titchener and Cattell, vice-presidents; Professor Watson, general secretary. The American representatives at the Geneva congress, so far as noted by the writer, were Professors Armstrong, Baldwin, Fullerton, Haines, Hollingworth, Huey, Jones (Toronto), Mrs. Ladd-Franklin, Leuba, Loeb, Max Meyer, Will S. Monroe, Ogden, Prince, Riley, Sanford, Strong, Vibbert, and Miss Williams.